

# Public Participation and Your Facility

Robert J. Brown, Jr., Director  
Div. of Air Planning, Development, and  
Outreach

SCDHEC – Bureau of Air Quality

[brownrj@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:brownrj@dhec.sc.gov)

(803) 898-4105





# What is Public Participation?

---

*"Public Participation is any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make decisions." (IAP2)*

*"A full range of actions and processes that EQC uses to involve the public in our work."*  
(EQC Public Participation Task Force)



# What Value does EQC put on Public Participation?

---

EQC values the public and believes that their perceptions are real and that they are our partner in protecting the health and the environment. EQC believes that our mission of protecting public health and the environment will be improved through enhanced public involvement.



# What does Management Expect from Staff?

---

All EQC staff is to facilitate public participation in appropriate ways as part of their normal job assignments (i.e., similar to our value of “customer service.” Public involvement is an important value to embrace.



# Public Participation Core Values for All

---

1. Public should have a say in decisions about actions affecting their lives.
2. Public participation includes promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of participants.



## Core Values (Cont.)

---

4. Process seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected.
5. Process involves participants in defining how they participate.
6. Process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



# How is Public Participation Useful to You?

---

- Public Participation will be more important for some facilities than others
- Building relationships with citizens, including possible future support
- Source of correct information to those involved and the public in general
- Identification of citizen's concerns



# Needed Public Participation Skills

---

- Effective Listening
- Effective Speaking
- Facilitation
- Presenting Information
- Dealing with Conflict
- Continuous Evaluation
- Ability to develop trust





# Trust

---

- Most important aspect of your efforts
- Listen effectively to concerns expressed; they are valid because they are believed in by the holders
- Be precise in information given out
- Use care in withholding information; while proper in many cases, better to be up-front about withholding and not evasive
- Never promise what may not develop



# How is Public Participation Implemented?

---

- Different for various types of organizations
- Review your present public reputation
- Begin with reaching out to public
- There is a variety of paths to develop communications with the public
- Involve the right company people



# Public Participation Implementation con't

---

- Listen to and recognize public concerns
- Find areas of mutual concern and build from there
- Follow through on commitments (info requests, site visits, promises, etc.)
- Follow up with continued meetings and other exchanges, even if reduced to annual meetings



# We can Help

---

- Good community relationships help you and our Agency function better
- We are working with many community, environmental, and industrial groups to improve their input into our processes
- We have staff to assist you efforts with public participation



# Community Liaisons

---

- Nancy Whittle – EQC Lead, Central Midlands  
803-896-8967
- Karen Sprayberry - Central Midlands  
803- 896-9730
- Richelle Tolton – Coastal  
843-953-0150
- Donna Rowe – Upstate  
864-241-1090



# Public Participation Contacts

---

- Lawra Boyce – Bureau of Air Quality  
803-898-4585
- Donna Moye – Land & Waste Management  
803-896-4281
- Karen Skipper – Bureau of Water  
803-898-8192
- Robbie Brown – Public Participation  
Workgroup Chairman  
803-898-4105